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FROM  
Temiskaming  
TO  
Hudson Bay



BY

C. A. M. PARADIS, O. M. I.  
MISSIONARY.

DEDICATED TO  
THE HONORABLE H. MERCIER

PRIME MINISTER  
OF THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.

—♦♦♦—  
1900.

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DEDICATION  
TO  
The Honorable Honore Mercier  
PRIME MINISTER  
OF THE  
PROVINCE OF QUEBEC.

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HONORABLE SIR,

Amidst the general applause of all Canadians for the impulse you have given to the work of colonization in this Province which is so happy to behold you as her Prime Minister, allow an humble missionary, who also loves his country and those who work for the welfare of his nation, to pay his modest tribute to the great enterprise of the national regeneration.

At a patriotic banquet tendered to you by your admirers of Montreal, and later on, at the opening of the session, I heard you (through the voice of the Press) express the desire to extend as far as Hudson Bay, the frontiers of

the Province of Quebec. That territory, you said, belongs to us, and we mean to take possession of it.

I heartily applaud, Mr. Premier, this patriotic design, and I wish to contribute to it to the full extent of my poor talent.

This is why I beg the honor to present you to day with this little memorial which I have compiled hastily from notes gathered in the course of my journeys through those regions you have found worthy of your attention.

My work as missionary enables me to corroborate the narrations of the Rev. Father Albanel, which you have quoted so opportunely.

Like the learned Jesuit, I have lived in the same climates, and admired the soil and products, which two hundred years ago, delighted the sight of the first pioneers of the Gospel who set foot on that part of the Continent.

So many treasures have remained hidden for centuries, or I should rather say, they have been laid aside for the time when our people, spreading in all directions, want only a favourable locality to establish their numerous off springs, and to strengthen, in expanding the generous race of French blood who had for its cradle the solitary shores of the New World. The North has always given birth to those

strong and vigorous races called by God, at different periods, to regenerate the enervated and wavering nations of the southern countries. " *Latera Aquilonis Civitas regis Magni* " (Ps 47, vs 2) " The seat of the Almighty stands towards the Aquilon."

This almighty King is Jesus-Christ reigning over a people which is wholly devoted to him ; and what nation into this day has been more true to the sacred traditions of its faith ? What nation then, has a better right to found this vast empire of the Aquilon where the almighty King shall establish his throne. . . . .

Forward towards the North, Canadians ! The North pole can only frighten cowards ; it will always exercise its magnetic attraction over our race of the iron arm and dauntless courage. However, there is no question of going to the pole just now. An unrivalled territory is opening close to us ; unrivalled for its expanse, the richness of soil, the salubrity of climate and the beauty of its landscapes.

You shall see, Mr Prime Minister, in this memorial, although it may be incomplete, that all those qualities exist in profusion in this region which you have planned to annex to our province.

May these few pages, written, rather with the heart of a patriot than with the learning of a scholar, be of some use to you. I would be happy to realize by this means two wishes equally dear to me : that of being useful to my country, and at the same time to give a token of admiration and gratitude to the distinguished friend of whom, I have the honor to be,

The most obedient servant,

C. A. M. PARADIS, Pst, O. M. I.

Buffalo N. Y. }  
June 5th, 1888 }



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FROM  
TEMISKAMING  
TO  
HUDSON BAY

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PART FIRST.

GENERAL GLANCE OVER THE REGION SITUATED  
BETWEEN LAKE TEMISKAMING AND  
JAMES BAY.

**Soil.—Climate.—Products.**

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CHAPTER I

SOIL.

I have a fixed idea on this vast country, (time will tell if I am mistaken.) My sincere belief is, that all the land situated between Lake Temiskaming and James Bay is a prolongation of the famous prairies of the North-West. Two principal facts lead me to believe in this supposition : 1° The configuration of the land 2° The nature of the soil.

I

*Configuration of the Land.*

Once we have left behind (I shall not even say the height of lands) but the chain of the Laurentides, we perceive, up to the shores of the Hudson Bay, that is to say for hundreds of leagues to the North and West, a plain of clay where mountains are exceptions, under the shape of slight undulations or as isolated peaks similar to those of Mount Royal or Belœil Mountain in the valley of the St Lawrence. In this connection, I expect to surprise a great many people and to differ a little in opinion with the narrations of many travellers. I divide these travellers into three very different categories. It is important to make them known for the proper understanding of this work. The first category comprises the scholars, the specialists whose object it is to study and to make others benefit by it. Though the missionary aims at a loftier end than this one, he does not think it, unworthy of his sublime mission to unite both, in associating in the same enthusiasm, the love of God and that of his country.

The second category of travellers is more numerous and is formed of business men attracted by the charms of fortune towards the fur trade or the lumber business. This second class has but little to communicate for the excellent reason that it has secrets *preferable* kept by themselves, or per-

haps silence is the best safeguard for their interest. From this category spring forth a third which is legion. They are the workmen, paid for the labor they perform for the lumber business, the exportation of furs, goods, provisions, and so forth.....

The knowledge of these latter is very limited and consequently, they make many incorrect statements. If you want unprejudiced information, do not ask them for it, because they will invariably give you this same answer : It is a wild country, sir, with no comfort whatever ; you only meet with rapids, rocks and precipices fit to break your neck. Poor people, you may well have pity on them, but you must believe only half of what they tell you. It is quite natural they should find this land so inhospitable. They care not for poetry and even less for science, continually fighting with the elements in the form of winds, currents and rapids ; their feet aching with sores from the roughness of the portages ; their heads stretched over the oars, or crushed under the weight of packs, they notice in nature only what brings them new sufferings.

A hundred miles of calm water means for them three days of drudgery ; and a rock lying across a portage becomes a mountain. This is more than enough to make one dislike a country for ever. There is no other means of travelling through a forest than by means of lakes and rivers. Forward ! then to the rapids and portages ! Should you

happen to make your way through the woods, the horizon, bounded by the trees, prevents your forming a right idea of the distance. If you climb up a hill, the nearest elevation to your's will at once attract your eye.

The great reason for thinking mountainous a soil covered with forest, is, that in our civilized countries, woods are seen only on mountains, and on spots unfit for cultivation. But, on the other hand, experiments have proved that with the clearing of lands the ruggedness of the ground seems to melt away and to be levelled by the ploughshare and where you expected to find a mountain *Nascitur ridiculus mus*. I do not hesitate for one moment to believe that, by the time our immense forests, have dissappeared, our grand sons will be surprised to find themselves in a plain, identical to that of their neighbors of Manitoba, with the advantage of having an abundance of water and wood in quantity.

## II

### *Nature of the soil.*

The nature of the soil, in my opinion, is an argument not less convincing than the configuration of the land. Those who have visited Manitoba and Temiskaming, declare its lands to be absolutely similar to those of the North-West, viz : A clay, of an average depth for 20 to 30 feet, overlaid by a vegetable mould black or brown but always exceedingly rich and friable.

On the lowest levels, there seems to remain thick sediments of alluvion, which would indicate the former presence of some large lakes, to-day non-existent. It is impossible to form an adequate idea of such richness. Mr Oliver Armstrong, the intrepid pioneer of the canadian pacific colonization Co. who is certainly an authority in these matters, declared to me enthusiastically that he had not met with anything so beautiful between Manitoba and the Rocky Mountains.

I firmly believe that all I say about Temiskaming applies equally to all that country extending on both sides of the height of lands to the 52<sup>o</sup> parallel latitude of Albany on Hudson Bay having seen it with my own eyes. And further yet for hundreds of leagues toward the North-West and the North. The missionaries who have extended their travels in that direction, and the Indians too make the same assertions. All this expanse, measuring more than a thousand miles, would be but the width of a zone of clay bounded to the west by the Rocky Mountains, and connected to the latter by the table land of Lake St John. This supposition is suggested to me not so much by my personal experience as by the collective testimony of all my brothers, the missionaries, who have traversed the different regions from ice-bound Alaska to the arid peaks which form a division between Labrador and the eastern side of Hudson Bay. The geolo-

gists and the missionaries are unanimous to declare that the chains of mountains form but a very slight portion of the steppes of North America, and that the soil is generally composed of a deep and fertile clay.

## CHAPTER II

### CLIMATE.

If we admit the above mentioned as facts we find ourselves face to face with a situation which should be seriously considered for the benefit of our national interests : if the beauty of the climate corresponds to the richness and the immensity of the soil, this new country will certainly rank in the future with the greatest of the world, for the reason that one day or another, it will become the seat of a great agricultural people. I shall now say a few words about the climate, this is a most delicate question people are so generally prejudiced against Hudson Bay in this respect that it would prove hard work to change their opinions, but really I do believe there is a great deal of exaggeration about it.

We will admit its icebergs, its cold winds and untimely snow-storms ; but this is not sufficient to make it responsible for the frosts and to overrate its influence over the temperature of the surrounding countries. Why not tell you at once that the real cause of the severe climate is the forest.

I

*Influence of the forest on the climate.*

For our long winters, our retarded springs, summer frosts and freezing weather of Autumn; we should render the forest accountable and not Hudson Bay.

When a person has not lived for a while in the woods, it is rather hard to know exactly what a virgin forest is, and to understand the influence it may possess over the temperature of a country, especially when this forest covers an area of hundreds of leagues. It must also be remarked that the forests which cover that part of North America are nearly all exclusively composed of trees which never loose their leaves. The spruce predominates. Every one has observed that the boughs of the white spruce are very thick and closely knit together. These trees grow very close one to another, and do not admit any strangers in their midst. Let us add that these monopolizers of the forest have invaded all the territory which extends from the height of lands to James Bay, where they have grown for centuries have increased so much that they now possess tremendous proportions. This is indeed the kingdom of the white spruce it is the indigenous tree *par excellence* and reproduces to an incredible extent. We shall mention this fact again when we come to speak of the lumber business. For the present it is simply a ques-

tion of analysing the effects produced on the temperature of the soil and the atmosphere by this green mass impenetrable to the rays of the sun.

On a bright summer's day, we glide down the River Abittibi between two ridges ninety to a hundred feet high. The midday sun pours down upon our heads, the thermometer marks 98° ; it is so hot that in a tin box which I have carefully closed, my candle assumes a liquid form and my matches become almost charred. *Il fait soif !* as the Indians say. But the Abittibi River similar in that respect and in many others to the Red River, rolls near us a muddy and tepid stream. How can we quench our thirst ? Many of us must remember. We believed ourselves to be in the torrid zone.

But wait ; our canoe approaches the shore, and without disembarking, we secure full goblets of pure cold water which springs forth from the forest in a sweetly murmuring brook. Should you leave the canoe and walk a few steps in the forest, a chill runs through you, you think yourself in a cave or an ice house. Whence arises this phenomenon ? Dig into the earth and you will find the solution of the problem. When you have dug out 12 to 15 inches of rubbish, you will find the clay to be hard and cristallized as in the middle of winter. You will then decide if it is Hudson Bay which conjeals us or these millions of acres of forests, which protects and keeps the snow at their feet till the

middle of June, and which from the beginning to the end of summer obstinately foils the efforts of the sun to reach the soil. From the earth to the atmosphere and from the atmosphere to the earth, the cold finds itself confined as it were in a sphere. Now, when night comes and the sun withdraws its benevolent rays, there is no warmth left in the atmosphere nor in the soil ; on the contrary the soil sends off its chilly exhalation ; little by little the air condenses, and this is sufficient reason for finding in the morning, the frost on the boughs of the trees and on the rocks of the shore.

Happily, as we shall later see, the shortness of nights in the middle of summer generally prevents the frost, and it is exceedingly rare to see any foliage harmed by the cold. But, nevertheless, the principle remains, perfidious, dangerous, and if the vegetation does not really suffer in any way at the period of its full bloom, its coming to maturity is much retarded if this delay of the vegetation is not brought by the influence of the forest, how then shall we explain the bloom, relatively hasty, of the North-West prairies with latitudes more to the North ?

In order to prove decidedly that it is the forest and not Hudson Bay that freezes us, I beg of you to notice another phenomenon which takes place on James Bay during summer : First of all, as I shall further explain it, the waters of James Bay are not at

all cold. In bathing, I always found its temperature much more agreeable than that of Lake Temiskaming at the same season.

With a north wind, the water of the bay, coming in contact with this cold air, vaporizes as over a boiling pail. The cold wind is of course mollified by fog which ascends higher and higher, thickens, condenses itself, and descends again as rain on the neighboring forests. It very seldom happens, I think, that these profuse *showers* reach or are felt at Montreal. The greater part are swallowed up by the moss which covers the floor of the forest, where they are for ever deprived of the rays of the sun, and of course become a new agent of refrigeration. These facts cannot be denied. Having been frequently remarked they are explained by the means of science.

## II

### *Influence of the clearing of lands over the temperature.*

Now let us fancy what will happen when, some day, those forests have disappeared to make way for cultivated fields, villages and even cities. Instead of remaining till the middle of June ; the snow will melt towards the middle or the end of April at the latest. Let us contemplate for instance, an area of 200,000, square miles of snow removed from the surface of the earth two months sooner than at present. The cold will be abated

enormous proportions ; and yet this is only negative. We will now calculate the quantity of warmth absorbed in a clay only by each ten square feet of the soil when uncovered. Which of us has not some times observed in spring how a small particle of earth, a bit of straw or even a hair thrown across the snow will accelerate its melting. But here we do not measure by ten feet or ten acres but by hundreds of miles. You would not accredit a great knowledge of physics to a person who asks you what difference is produced in the temperature of a room by a block of ice three feet long, or a stove of the same size well filled and well heated.

A long while after the combustible is consumed the earth still retains and diffuses warmth. The same thing happens with the soil : the warmth it absorbs during a bright sunny day maintains the lukewarmness of the air for the whole night. The next day if the dose is repeated there will be a surplus disposable on the neighbouring localities. From point to point, the cold will be pushed back to the North, and should it try to revenge itself, it would surely like the soldiers of Hannibal be enervated by the luxuries of Capua.

From the clearing of lands, three undeniable results accrue, viz : 1° An earlier spring 2° A longer and milder summer 3° A later autumn, and less abrupt. These results in the province of Quebec during the

past 50 years have been demonstrated. According to the old people it often happened that the crops were frozen on the shores of the St Lawrence, 25 or 30 years ago who would have thought of cultivating vine-trees in the open air? To-day, science declares that Canada may become a vine growing country quite equal to France. I notice every year that the snow remains three weeks longer in the *chantiers* than it does where the lands are cultivated and even a few miles further. From this, I infer even at the risk of being found ridiculous by the present generation, that when our grandsons get rid of these immense forests "summer will be two months longer in Canada."

When I speak of the North, I do not mean to bring at once my settlers to the great "Slave Lake" although they will go some day; by the North, I mean the zone lying between the 46° and the 52° parallels; this zone extends from lakes Huron and Nipissing to James Bay and lakes St John and Mistassini. When the forests disappear, steamers will be safe on Hudson Bay, the icebergs having been pushed back, as a natural consequence of the heating of the atmosphere around these regions, the actual isothermal lines which give an æstival average of 60° around Moose-Factory, will perhaps be retrograded as far as the Northern limits of James Bay and the greater part of the ice will melt before reaching the coast. Here I stop, rather alarmed by my audacity. If later

on, other theorists desire to confer upon farthest north the enjoyments of perpetual summer and since science progresses every day, they may employ stronger and more effective means than those I suggest to day to bring about such a result. But until then, let us hold to the idea of the clearing of our forests.

Still, I want to be well understood when I talk about clearing of lands, I do not mean to exterminate all our varieties of timber. The forests, as well as the mountains, have each a part to play in the climaterical economy of a country, and to act wisely we must preserve ample quantities of these wood and sometimes even replant.

### III

#### *Climate of Moose-Factory compared to the same latitudes in Europe and Asia.*

All I have said about the forests is not with the object of inducing you to imagine that the region it comprises is inhospitable and not fit to be inhabited. I simply want to show you that the complaints made about the climate of that territory are brought about by a concurrence of circumstances purely accidental and are sometimes wrongly attributed to its geographical position. I will also add, although I maintain the truth of my first proposition, that the climate of this country is not so unfavourable as some have tried to make it out, and I will prove it di-

rectly. First by the geographical position. Taking Albani as a starting point, I find that this spot is only 120 miles north of Winnipeg, while Lake Nipissing on the southern frontier corresponds to the latitude of Three-Rivers. The central point of this region has the same latitude as lake St John with an elevation of 492' above the level of the sea. It is about the same elevation as river Mat-tawan discharging into the Ottawa. After this general view, consult our best geographic works and compare the region which is under discussion with the different table-lands of Europe and Asia situated between the same parallels and at altitudes still higher, and you will see that many countries of the old world which appear to be situated less favourably, support numerous agricultural populations. It should be sufficient to mention the fact that the British Isles are entirely situated to the north of the latitude of Moose-Factory ; of course the B. Isles may invoke in their favor the benevolent effects of the Gulf Stream ; but it is impossible for the north of Germany and a part of the Russian Empire in Europe as well as in Asia, to claim the same privilege. However, it is a fact that in those countries wheat ripens beyond the 53° ; that is, at 50 miles north of Albani. If we can establish as a fact that the most northern point of the region which engages our attention is favourable to the culture of wheat ; we may surely say in consequence *a fortiori* that the

whole of the said region enjoys a climate most propitious for agriculture. This is why I have chosen as a point of comparison the forest of Moose-Factory on the shores of James Bay, latitude  $51^{\circ} 15'$ . But, if you lay down a principle you must support it with facts. I have gathered the following informations on the climate of this locality :

#### IV

*A few meteorologic observations made in the vicinity of James Bay.*

The average of heat in Moose is of  $60^{\circ}$  ; in the warmest days it reaches  $80^{\circ}$ . This summer, 1884, the maximum I observed at Albani, 120 miles to the north, has been  $95^{\circ}$ . Mr McLeod, a resident of New-Post, (72 miles south of Moose) declared to me that he counted  $100^{\circ}$  on his thermometer the 20th of June. You see at once that these figures are exceptional. I have already said that on the rivers, and especially in the wooded lands, the heat is extreme during the day, while at night the mercury goes down as far as  $26^{\circ}$  at the end of June. At James Bay, however, the temperature is more equal than the interior of the country. This proves once more, the influence of the forest over the atmosphere. In the colder days of winter, the thermometer often goes down to  $40^{\circ}$  ; all are unanimous in saying that the quantity of snow which falls in Moose during one winter is less than in Ottawa. It may prove

useful to give a little synopsis of the temperature of Manitoba.

	MANITOBA	MOOSE-FACTORY
In the year 1881 {	Maximum 93°	91°
	Average 56°	60°
	Cold--Maximum 40°	39°

N. B. At the moment I write these lines, December 20th 1884, the thermometer marks 38° cold, here, at Maniwaki, on the river Gatineau, 100 miles north of Ottawa.

## V

### *Opening of Navigation.*

The opening of navigation at Moose takes place between the 10th and the 26th of May. According to notes existing at the Fort of the Hudson Bay Company, navigation was never impeded by reason of ice on the first of June. The writings which attest this fact represent a century of uninterrupted observations. In 1860, the sea was unobstructed the first day of May; the boats are generally put into winter quarters by the last week of November. From those computations scrupulously accurate and which embrace a period of sixty years, we may conclude that James Bay affords six entire months of navigation. The fact is probably due to the early breaking up of the large tributary rivers which take their use in the southern region.

If the rumor I have heard is true, viz : that Hudson Bay is unimpeded for 12 months

of the year (which seems credible) and the current of the straits is so impetuous, that it does not permit of any iceberg stopping, the problem of the navigation of this important sea, will be quickly solved.

*Remarks.*

I see no reason whatever why the climate of this famous territory of Hudson Bay should be worse than that of the province around the Gulf of St Lawrence. I am inclined to believe that a comparison would tend to the advantage of the first because it is protected by the coats of Labrador, from the great arctic current which reaches us through the straits of Belle Isle. This current does not affect Hudson Bay, its waters are forced to the north by the large rivers whose estuaries are all found on its southern shores. This is more than enough, I think, to convert altogether the unbelievers, or at least to make them reflect seriously upon the matter. If, notwithstanding all that, the name alone of Hudson Bay makes them shiver, I will suggest a little experiment to these skeptics. It would be to forget for a few days that they possess in Montreal or Ottawa, cities I chose as being most favoured by climate, houses well built and well heated. Then during one of those agreeable weeks of cold rain with which we are generally blessed at the end of July, let them enjoy in the open air the luxuries of Indian life as it is practised, willing or not, on the wild

shores of James Bay : Sleep on the naked earth with no other shelter than a small tent ; cook their own food and dry their clothes near a smouldering fire of green wood which sends more smoke to their eyes than warmth to their back ; eat in elegant tin dishes, and a thousand other blessings. I will wager anything that of a 100 persons who will try this experiment, 99 out of them will curse the *hateful climate* of Montreal.

### CHAPTER III

#### NATURAL RICHNESS, MINES, FORESTS, AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES.

According to Dr. Bell and other explorers the region of Hudson Bay is one of the richest in the world in mines of all sorts. As my knowledge is naturally limited on this subject, I will quote the words of those who are competent to speak of the matter. As to the agricultural and forest resources, I shall not speak of them in special paragraph as they naturally have their place with the details concerning each region or zone of which we shall make a review in the second part of this work. This is the reason why I shall speak only of mineral wealth in this chapter.

#### *Mineral wealth.*

This is what professor Bell says about it :  
“ All around James Bay and on the eastern coast of Hudson Bay there are numerous

indications of iron and coal, so close one to another that by taking advantage of the cheap means of transport afforded by the navigation in these localities the whole country around James Bay might become another Pennsylvania. The mines of Hudson Bay will surely turn out to be its greatest richness ; vast deposits of iron have been found on Mattagami river in 1867 ; and inexhaustible quantities of excellent magnetic iron have been found in the islands bordering the eastern coast of James Bay and also most promising signs of galena."

" Gold, silver and copper are found in the environs of *Rivière à la Baleine* and on the eastern coast, quantities of lignite." Another explorer, speaking about the rich deposits of iron, coal and other ores which exist in the neighbourhood of James Bay, says : " I declare without the slightest hesitation this country to possess the richest mines of the Dominion and perhaps of the continent." Anthracite and iron are found along the rivers situated south of James Bay, and indication of petroleum on Abittibi river. Mr. Borron, acting as stipendiary magistrate for the district of Nipissing, makes the following report to the government of Ontario: " There exists in the neighbourhood of James Bay, north of the height of land, immense peat beds possibly the most extensive in the world. The thickness of these beds is between 8' and 20' feet. In view of such prodigious quantities, one cannot help wondering what

use will later on be made of it. " Besides lignite, there is also kaolin or porcelain clay and iron. "

" Lignite has been discovered in great quantities in beds three feet thick, on both sides of river Abittibi, north of the height of land. " I could multiply the quotations, but I shall end by relating what I have witnessed on the Abittibi river and on lake Temiskaming.

In the first place, abundant deposits of gypsum at the confluence of the Moose and the Abittibi, slate in different places, ascending the river ; and lime stone nearly everywhere ; iron pyrites at lake Obasatika ; slate on Montreal river, and argentiferous galena on lake Temiskaming. It is on this same lake that are found the most magnificent quarries of cut stone which exist in the Dominion, both the quality and abundance. What renders them more precious is, that the blocks can easily be detached from the shore and laid immediately on barges without the least trouble. By means of the easy navigation afforded by lake Temiskaming this cut stone can be transported a distance of 200 miles ; this goes to prove the importance of such a supply in a region where extensive mines will be in operation before long. This is in concise form what is known to day of the mineralogy of this vast territory. But this will not prevent other discoveries from being made, and the gradual disappearance of the forests will bring many others.

## SECOND PART

### DETAILED REVIEW OF THE DIFFERENT ZONES FROM ALBANI TO LAKE TEMISKAMING.

#### *Remarks.*

Now that we have a general idea of the soil and climate, I think my work would insufficiently demonstrate the importance of this territory, were I not to offer in addition a distinct classification of the different regions which form the immense territory of Hudson Bay ; at least that part I have visited which extends from Albani, on James Bay, south to lake Temiskaming : for in an area of 200,000 square miles it is impossible that the same remarks would properly apply to the whole region as regards soil, climate, and products. Otherwise, I would be as ridiculous as that influential person, recently arrived from France, who judged all the lands of Canada by the first heap of gravel which met his eye in setting foot on the soil of Quebec. I will therefore divide this future province into four regions, or rather four zones, beginning with Albani, because it stands more to the north, and coming back towards the height of land which separates the waters of Hudson Bay from those of the St Lawrence, and ending with lake Temiskaming, a jewel worthy of a place at the summit of the crown.

A description of James Bay is necessary to give a correct idea of the lands surrounding it.

## CHAPTER I

JAMES BAY — ITS DEPTH — NATURE OF ITS WATERS — ITS INHABITANTS — ITS INFLUENCE OVER THE CLIMATE AND THE FORMATION OF THE NEIGHBOURING SOIL — ITS NAVIGATION.

### I

#### *Extent and depth.*

James Bay takes its name from an english Captain (James) who was held captive with his vessel on its waters during the winter of 1632. This bay is sometimes mistaken for Hudson Bay which begins 400 miles further north at cape Henrietta Maria. The line of demarcation between these two sheets of water, measures about 200 miles from East to West. Allowing for the sinuosities, this gives James Bay an approximative area of 75,000 miles. The whole of this extent is navigable for vessels of heavy tonnage except twenty leagues along the southern and western coasts where the water has so little depth that even at high tide, one must proceed with great caution even in a birch-bark canoe. It often happens, far beyond the shores, that you can reach the bottom of the waters with the end of the paddle.

## II

### *Nature of its waters.*

When the tide is low, the beach measures 4 or 5 miles wide, and the sea appears in the distance as a deep blue line. Then this vast extent of mud and gravel becomes warm with the rays of the sun ; and when the tide comes in, the heat passes from the earth to the water which covers it ; so that the water, already lukewarm remains all summer at a temperature much higher than you would expect to find in those latitudes. Another reason for this high temperature is that many of the large rivers which flow into James Bay have their origin in the south. The volume of these rivers being considerable, the cold waters of the sea are driven back to a distance by the combined discharge of these streams. Sometimes, when you are yet too far out at sea to catch sight of the mouth of a river, you are informed of its proximity by the taste of the water which is at that distance perfectly sweet. Moreover, at a considerable distance from the coasts, the waters of Hudson Bay are not altogether salt, but rather brackish. For the reasons above mentionned, the waters of James Bay are very seldom perfectly clear ; especially when the wind blows ever so little, it becomes a veritable sea of mud.

### III

#### *Its inhabitants.*

On account of its muddy water and also its want of depth along the coasts, there is a scarcity of fish life along its shores ; we must however except the eastern portion, the shores of which are abrupt, between the mouths of the rivers, and the promontories porpoises are seen to be numerous. The sturgeon exists in abundance at the mouth of the rivers and in the Abittibi, also the carp, the white fish and a multitude of other varieties. I had often been told that the fish in the North was more delicious than the same varieties in our southern rivers. I have demonstrated the truth of this statement. The seal, the cod, the salmon and sea trout are found in abundance towards the East Main river coast ; the whale puts in an appearance in the waters, their depth being ample.

### IV

#### *Influence of James Bay on the climate.*

It is easy to understand the effect produced on the climate of this region by such a vast extent of water with a temperature relatively luke-warm. Vegetation has never been spoilt by an untimely frost at Moose or in the neighborhood. The vapours which arise from the sea cooled by the air, form as it were a protective cloud, which wards off anything which menaces vegetation. More-

over the nights are so short during summer that the light of the sun does not completely disappear from the horizon and the atmosphere thus has not time to sufficiently allow of frost occurring.

## V

*Of the part played by the waters of James Bay in the formation of the surrounding lands.*

With a climate as mild as that of James Bay, and with as rich a fertilizer as the ooze contained in its waters, it is no wonder that all the shores subject to its influence exhibit everywhere exceptional productiveness. The soil is continually craving to produce as soon as it has escaped from the power of the waves. This is why, from year to year, the earth encroaches on the waters of the Bay and will doubtless end in taking possession of the greater part of its present domains. It is most striking, even for an unobsevant person, to watch the land making in roads on the waters. This phenomenon takes place in the following manner : As I have already said, a multitude of large and small rivers come running from the East, South and West, towards James Bay crossing the vast plain of clay which extends from the sea to the height of land, and bring along in their wild course not only the remains of the forests they destroy on the way, but also the vegetable mould around their roots and the

clay of the lower levels so that the waters get completely charged with debris.

This does not take place in spring only, on the breaking up of the ice ; but all the year round and at each hour of the day; quantities of debris of all kinds reach the sea in this way and are received by its waters only to be thrown on the shore, driven away, and again hurled back, until they gather in compact heaps which the waters finally recide from. All at once, a thousand germs held in suspense by the muddy element, begin to germinate under the salutary influence of the sun. The reeds, the wild oats, wild peas, the parsley and the gentian invade this newly made land ; and a multitude blooming and a fragrant flowers unknown in our climates. The following year the currant tree and the jumper tree assert themselves, and also a few young branches of willows under whose shelter ripen the lucious strawberry. Go further still, and you behold the meadow regulary formed, with its fodder long and thick undulating with the gentle breeze. When you have walked for a couple of miles across these meadows, adorned with a luxuriant flora which would doubtless delight the sight of a botanist, you fancy yourself to be near an orchard. Here and there clumps resembling beautiful apple-trees but alas ! it is only what Virgil called : *Salices amaras*. The bushes grow larger ; you now see the top of poplars ; the larch follows, then the rough spruce, it is almost a forest. Now and

then you are forced to take a roundabout way to avoid a shallow-pond where ducks are disporting themselves ; you also get acquainted with myriads of mosquitoes. But you will soon get rid of them if you have been wise enough to anoint the vulnerable parts with *Maringuoinifuge*. We stand in a young forest, for the trees are yet small. Whence come these partly decayed tree trunks which are strewn at our feet ? They form around the pond a circular hillock cemented together with sand and fragments of shells ? This is evidently the work of the sea.

In a few years these uprooted trees which cover the edges of the beach will have moved a few miles into the interior of the forest. The small ponds to which the ducks resort, on whose border the wild goose builds her nest, will be filled up by the leaves of the trees, overgrown, invaded by moss and transformed into a savannah. Such is the origin of the vast peat beds which with a width of 25 or 30 miles, form the distinctive character of the land which extends on the shores of the Bay from Moose to hundreds of miles beyond Albani. Here the work of nature is so rapid that it is impossible not to notice it at once especially at the mouth of the rivers which gradually loose their depth on account of the sediment accumulating without intermission.

In 1859 the boats went as far as Moose and Albani. Since 1867, boats are forced to cast

anchor about 10 miles further down, and the channel becomes narrower every day.

A few travellers pretend that the diminutiveness of the vegetation which exists in the vicinity of James Bay is a proof of the severity of the climate. I think I am perfectly right in affirming that it is the strongest proof of the rapidity with which vegetation hastens to profit by each single inch of earth reclaimed from the sea. Land reclamation proceeds at a great rate. Before many centuries have passed away, vast herds of cattle will browse on the soft grass on the bottom lands where the old *Chum*, more than once, nearly left our birch-bark canoe.

## VI

### *Navigation of James Bay.*

You must not infer from what I have said that navigation is impracticable around James Bay, but simply this: that large boats must keep at a certain distance from the shores, select the proper channels and wait for the tide to enter the harbour. At Moose and Albani: the highest tide is not more than ten feet, but this is sufficient to allow vessels to enter in safety. On the eastern coast, the shores are more sharply defined and the waters deeper so that navigation is in no way impeded. This coast is even said to be free from ice all winter.

*The Maringuoinifuge.*

I am not joking ; this is the name of a medicine patented on the 3rd of July 1884, which possesses the virtue of driving away these tiresome flies and of curing their stings. I would not undertake a journey through the forest in summer without this preparation.

I mention it here, because having made use of it for over 15 years with constant success, it is only just I should recommend it to all ; it would be too bad to see my brothers devoured by those small blood-suckers when I know of such an infallible relief. This is a philanthropic warning I give my friends not to forget this precious drug if they ever undertake the same trip we are making in mind, at present. Like all things it has a disagreeable side which can be avoided with a bottle of *Maringuoinifuge*.

CHAPTER II

FIRST ZONE.

*From Albany to Moose-Factory.*

*(distance : 120 miles)*

N. B. I make use of the term " zone " in preference to that of " region " to give an exact idea of a measure in width only ; while I do not intend to define any limit in regard to the length.

I

*Albani River.*

Albani river is one of the largest feeders of James Bay. It has its source in the series of lakes situated to the North West of lake Nipigon at about sixty miles from Thunder-Bay on lake Superior. This river flows through fertile and wooded lands : Three hundred miles before reaching the sea, is situated the last fall " Martens' Fall " which is the terminus of navigation in the lower part of the river, for boats drawing not more than four feet. On account of its position which puts it in direct touch with the sea, Martens' Fall has in store a prosperous future, all the more that its climate is milder than at Fort Albani, the soil is also of excellent nature. I have been told that barley and potatoes will ripen there and a few experiments have proved that wheat could come to its full maturity.

II

*Fort Albany. Climate and agriculture.*

The soil here is different they say ; but my opinion is that agriculture has never been seriously attempted. Agriculture is not the object in view of the honorable Company of Hudson Bay. Its employees care more for the title of good traders than that of skilled farmers. They harvest only the crop of aquatic hay necessary for the

wintering of splendid herds of oxen which, during summer, wander on the shores of the island where they find abundant pasture.

Still, there seems to have been, long ago, a period of agricultural glory for the republic of Albany. About twenty years ago, some old Indians of the country related to Father Viau that in their young days, they had admired at Fort Albany certain farming implements and regarded as relics. The reverend Father was much surprised to recognize, by these description a *watering pot* a sure proof that the dampness was not excessive in those heroic ages. Who was the Cincinnatus who thus gave agriculture a place of honor? History does not mention his name. This much is certain though, that since the death or the recall of that benefactor of humanity, the gardening around Fort Albany presents a very poor and meagre aspect.

I saw this summer, 1884, a few sickly sprouts of potatoes which at the 10th of July were scarcely coming out of the earth. The climate should not be made responsible for this ; for, at the same time, the poplar's leaves were pretty well grown and a robust currant-tree hidden under a palisade seemed to say to the passers by : See ! how warm it is in the sun ! With a hand, perhaps indiscreet, I lifted up one of its branches, and to my great surprise, it was thick with fruit. I learned more from this small shrub than from the people in the house, and I am per-

fectly convinced that with a little good will, Albany would soon rival Moose for the beauty of its gardening and even the culture of certain cereals.

It is true that the soil is moist. But what can you expect from grounds with absolutely no drainage. You would work no wonders even in Montreal under the same conditions. An evident proof of the contempt the members of H. B. Company profess for agriculture consists in the following fact which will strike everybody as it has astonished me. The establishment of Fort Albany dates two-centuries back. Well, since that epoch, our residents of H. B. Company have not laid a single shovel of manure on the soil they pretend to cultivate. Some will perhaps say: there is nothing surprising in this, since they do not bring up any animals; if so, I will ask some learned person to explain to me the phenomenon by which there is found close to the Company's stables a veritable mountain of *massive compost* measuring several hundred feet in length, about as much in width; and 30 to 40 feet high, this is tremendous. The pyramid (to soften the expression) stands as above mentioned close to the stables of the Hon. Company, the precious substance is removed by means of wheelbarrows; this is not all, as these wheelbarrows must invariably be discharged on the summit of this heap they have laid down planks to make the ascent easier and many times in the day, you may see the

barrows taken up and emptied on the ever increasing pile. They keep adding to it, but never take away from it. This fact is more than strange ; I thing it is singular in the history of the agricultural world ; this is why I could not resist the temptation of making it known. Who knows that later this new sort of mine may not be exploited and prove of immense value. Let it be well understood at once that the members of the H. B. Company do not care about agriculture for the simple reason that its results in their lands, would be a strong and emphatic denial of all the absurd rumors spread over the world by this powerful Company, representing their fur country as uninhabitable.

We must believe these interested geographers to the same extent as we rely on the statements of the lumbermen as to whether the lands they hold under licence are fit for colonization or not.

### III

#### *The Mission of Albany.*

The lumbermen of H. B. are no better farmers than the traders. The first wish to monopolize the woods, and the others would be cut into pieces rather than allow the least encroachment on the *sacred* trade of furs. Their motto *Pro pelle cutem* is a veritable war cry. It is the pass-word and countersign of a legion of pioneers active, indefatigable, rapacious and cunning and who have all

become clever in their business. The agents of the Company are the only white men who frequent these vast regions. They form a hierarchy admirably disposed in which throughout reigns the most severe discipline, whose code may be summed up in three principal points : 1° Not to allow any white man in the territory 2° to prevent the natives from leaving the place 3° to secure all the furs. Missionaries alone are admitted, but under the condition *Sine qua non* of unviolable respect for their laws. This is how we have been enabled to found a mission at Fort Albany which is relatively flourishing. We also built a pretty church of 100 feet by 40, attended by a population of four or five hundred souls. This number represents but one half of the total population. The other half belongs to the Protestant faith presided over by a Minister who has his residence there and a church of considerable size. Both bodies are on pretty good terms, this means that our neighbors succeed in their propaganda during the days of famine only. The Indians of Albany and of all the territory around James Bay are moral very clever and susceptible of education. As to their exterior they are handsome men, robust and well built, there is nothing deformed or repulsive about their features. They are endowed with a clear complexion and bright eyes. They are all hunters but exceedingly poor. The lot of furs they bring in each year to the governor of the Company, would be

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more than sufficient to allow a Canadian family to live in luxury for 12 months. But at Fort Albany they give them, in return for that wealth, only what is strictly wanted to go back to the woods and not die of hunger.

Many a time have I seen those poor starving people, wandering in rags around the palisades, driven away with about as much consideration as you would show towards mangy-dogs. This shows the agreeable side of all monopolies. It was one of these gentlemen who said to me, alarmed at the prospect of seeing this country opened to civilization : " Father Paradis, you should write against this confounded railroads. Dont you see that they will bring the yankees here and that they will destroy your missions. " He meant the railroad between Callendar and James Bay, a question that was greatly agitated in 1884. And to think that unto this day the great interests of colonization have remained in such hands !

#### IV

##### *The Prairies.*

Between Moose-Factory and Albany river and for hundreds of leagues north of this river, there spread over the whole slope of James and H. B. prairies similar to those of the North-West of which, moreover, they form a part. When I say that these prairies are exactly similar to those of Manitoba, I

may dispense with giving a description of them for everybody knows what the Manitobalands are like. As for the climate, it will suffice to remark that Albany is about the same latitude as Prince-Albert. I have proved that the conditions in the neighbourhood of James Bay instead of accelerating the frost rather ward it off. It must be admitted then that the prairies of which I am writing are most beneficial to colonization. The rearing of cattle could be practiced on a large scale and would give an impetus to all the industries dependent upon it. The grass of these prairies possesses a peculiar essence and flavor which imparts to milk and butter produced from the cattle which eat it, an exquisite taste one which you would seek for in vain in our climates. There are millions of acres of land actually unoccupied where thousands of families could settle if only that *confounded railroad* to James Bay could be constructed. What a fine field would be opened up to the cheese-making industry without mentioning the trade in cattle which could be made direct with Europe. Since large vessels leave London every year to be loaded with our precious furs, I see no reason that would prevent other vessels following the same route for different commercial purposes. To ask the question is to solve the problem.

V

*Game.*

I cannot leave the shores of James Bay without saying a word concerning another resource peculiar to that country. It is the myriads of birds of all sorts who haunt these shores, build their nests and multiply without molestation and this since the fourth day of the creation. You may wish to know what attracts so many birds to these latitudes. A good reason perhaps is that they are left in peace, but there is another one, and in my opinion it is the real one : Animals, as well as men, like to live where they find their food and pleasures. Those vast prairies are nothing but tables sumptuously furnished with all the dainties which tend to make a bird happy. There you have immense fields of wild-oats which look as if they were carefully kept in order, in fact they seem to have been sown by the hand of man ; elsewhere, you see the wild pea in abundance and also a multitude of other grasses and herbs around which the wild goose, the duck, the teal, the ozawaceci and the cececo. These happy inhabitants are disturbed only for a few days each fall by the hunters of Hudson Bay who come to secure their quota of wild geese. They kill on an average about 36,000 a year for each Fort. It makes no more difference than if you took a drop of water from the sea. Don't you find in this a branch of commerce to develop ? I know that the H. B. Company

exports annually large quantities of feather and down without mentioning the luxury of eating this most delicate meat in all seasons.

### CHAPTER III

#### SECOND ZONE

*From Moose-Factory to New-Post.*  
(distance : 73 miles. Altitude : 196 feet)

#### I

##### *Moose-Factory.*

As a rule all the posts of Hudson Bay look alike. But that of Moose-Factory has a distinctive feature of aristocracy to be found nowhere else. In fact, Moose-Factory is a capital. Besides being the residence of an anglican Bishop who possesses a fine cathedral, Moose has streets set in a straight line bordered with immense stores, a steam saw-mill, a powder-magazine, and a goodly number of comfortable looking houses which belong to Indians civilized like real Englishmen.

The city is situated at the southern extremity of an island which bears the same name. It possesses a vast and safe harbour where you see a small flottilla in constant evolution ; it is composed of vessels of small tonnage ; because the vessels which 40 years ago came to cast anchor under the muzzles of the canons at the Fort, are obliged to day to keep at a respectful distance of 14 miles

below, on account of the deposits of alluvion which constantly raise the bottom of the river, as I have explained in the preceding chapters. The island of Moose is not the only one at the mouth of the river of the same name; there are two others of equal length and five or six of smaller dimensions forming altogether an archipelago which is but the former delta of the river intersected by narrow channels. It is evident that there is actually a new delta forming itself, about 10 miles below, following the shores of the sea which are perceptibly advancing to the conquest of the waters. All these islands are covered by a luxuriant vegetation, their formation indicates the richness of their soil and that of the neighbouring region. Herds of oxen roam at pleasure all summer in these pasture-lands which I declare, without any possibility of being mistaken to be the finest in the world. They cannot be surpassed in quality. There are no poisonous nor useless herb. The hay is much superior in quality to the millet of our meadows judging by the excellent taste it imparts to the flesh and milk of the animals who eat it. The Company of H. B. rears in those fertile fields hundreds of horned-cattle, also pigs, horses and other domestic animals. I see no reason why a settler could not do what the powerful Company has been doing for centuries. Besides, there is room for more people on the millions of acres of excellent land over which we travel in returning towards the

south, as I will explain later on. I have spoken about the climate in general. That of Moose is certainly very favorable to agriculture. To contradict this assertion would be to combat all the experience of past years. The members of the Company need hay and they get it in abundance. The cereals would be of no use to them for they have no mill and besides, they get their flour very cheap direct from England. Wheat ripens at Moose and further north too; the Chief-Factor told me that heads of wheat having been thrown away on the soil took root there, and came to full maturity. This is not surprising at all when you look at the splendid garden results at the Fort. I found no difference whatever, at the same period of the year, between the vegetation of this country and that of the land bordering the shores of St Lawrence in the vicinity of Falmouraska. Now, when you consider that Moose-Factory is situated below the 51° parallel and the foot of lake Temiskaming below the 47°, an expanse of more than 300 leagues towards the south, we must admit its great possibilities for colonization, since the soil is everywhere remarkably rich? For centuries we have been deceived by representations that this territory was not fit for agriculture, arid, icy, cold and uninhabitable. "*A few arpents of snow.*" Has not the province of Quebec been thus similarly decried?

## II

### *From Moose to the Junction.*

We will now leave behind us the Moose-Factory settlement and penetrate a few hundreds of miles into the solitudes of the forests which separate the traders of the North from Quebec civilization centres.

I cannot rest contented with the general definition I gave of this region viz: "a vast plain of clay most favourable to colonization" I must speak as a man can who has visited the locality and who is in a position to give details. We will then take our birch-bark canoe and ascend patiently the rapid current which, after a distance of 18 miles, will bring us to the confluence of River Abittibi with Moose river, the waters of which we are ascending. The general aspect of this expanse is uniform. The river 2 miles wide in some places, is shallow, pebbly, and intersected by numerous bars. These 18 miles consist in numerous flat rapids, succeeded in each instance by calm and deep pools. These rapids are not the result of a sudden elevation of the ground, for the average of slope is not quite 3 feet to the mile or about 60' on a length of 18 miles. The rounded boulders which are found in the bottom of the river and which partly form the banks are of the same kind as those we meet with on the shores of James Bay viz: a granitical formation, with limestone in smaller proportion. The average size of the largest

does not exceed 3 or 4 feet in diameter ; the surface being generally rounded, weathered, and polished, a sure sign that they have been in contact with water and ice. On nearing the shores you will observe that the same species of rocks exist in the earth. These stones are inlaid in the layers of clay, decreasing in number and size as they approach the surface of the soil, and disappear altogether 5 or 6 feet before reaching the vegetable layer. This latter deposit varies in thickness according to the undulation, the lower levels having a preponderance of rich alluvion. The banks of the river have thus a uniform height of about twenty feet above low water mark. The floods in spring, being very sudden and copious cause a tremendous amount of erosion on the clay banks. The stones remain in part but the mud is carried to the estuary and there forms deltas, islands, points and new-shores. Owing to this perpetual erosion the lower part of Moose River is rendered unnavigable for vessels of ordinary tonnage. It would require considerable dredging to form another channel deep enough to allow of navigation vessels of ordinary tonnage. Dredging however would not be difficult, such operations would result in obtaining a navigable channel and largely prevent the constant erosion on both banks.

If you cast a glance at the forests on both sides of the river you will notice that the red and white spruce predominate. Years ago,

there were enormous trees here but being so close to Moose, they have fallen under the axe of the powerful Company, which I am told at one time did considerable business in this kind of timber with England. Ten years ago you could still see the ruins of an old mill at the foot of the first rapid. The Governors have replaced it by a steam saw-mill where I have seen logs 30 inches diameter ! What a barren country !!

### III

#### *From the Junction to Clay-Falls.*

*(distance : 137 miles)*

Here, we are at an elevation of 60 feet above the level of the sea. We now leave Moose River to proceed up the muddy Abittibi. As we will not see the limpid waters of the noble Moose River again, let us take a last glimpse of it. The scenery is beautiful : a rocky islet 50 ft. high at the summit, and rather narrow defies the raging waves, and divides the two currents which at this spot are about equal in width say  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile.

To the right, we behold the brown but transparent waters of the Moose gliding calmly through a labyrinth of small islands, of elegant formation. To the left, the turbid Abittibi rolls across the rocky ledges, the summits of which stand menacingly above the foam, like monsters waiting to devour the passer by.

Nevertheless, we must go in that direction,

if we want to reach the Eden of Temiskaming instead of going towards Lake Superior. Although, its waters are not tempting, the Abittibi river has in store for us, agreeable surprises and pleasing landscapes. Were there only the stately trees, we already see, and the beautiful roses which adorn the shore, it would be quite enough. At this place, the river is nearly on the same level as the summit of the Falls we have just left, but the shores are considerably higher on both sides. They reach before proceeding far an average height of 50 feet. The shores are covered with the same kind of rocks. There is, in the rear, a sort of sloping terrace between 100 and 200 feet wide. This bottom land is covered with high tufted grasses from amongst which springs forth a veritable forest of rose-trees which are in bloom at the beginning of July and perfume the air. These fragrant flowers from a gigantic garland extending along the river banks 20 to 30 miles. These bright colors standing out in relief on a green ground alternately light and dark, form a charming picture. As a back ground to this scenery stands out the boldly defined cliff of a grayish yellow color deeply furrowed by babbling streamlets. They represent the drainage system of the forest. We can see above our heads, in the banks the protending roots of the trees. Such is the aspect of the river's bed and the land in proximity to its banks.

It is evident that the attractive bottom

lands we admired a while ago are formed out of the debris of the cliffs. These lands are flooded every spring, and the wild waters belabour the walls of clay, and are continually encroaching upon them; in fact the land slips are sometimes considerable and numbers of trees are precipitated headlong into the river. The current carries this material out to the estuary and sea and the Esquimaux are provided with wood thereby at a cheap rate. This fact shows the delicate solicitude of the good Mother "Providence" who never fails to provide for the wants of her children. Now, if we climb up to the higher table-land, and walk a short distance into the interior, we will forget the fact that the river flows at 50 and sometimes at 100 feet beneath.

We stand in a vast plain slightly undulating, covered with dense forests in which the white spruce predominates. We notice also some splendid birch-trees. The soil is generally covered with a thick and damp moss and the underbush being dense one can proceed but slowly. The Indians have blazed, here and there, portages to expedite their travels from one lake to another, in pursuit of fur bearing animals but, I assure you these paths are far from being of any practical use from the colonization point of view.

IV

*From Clay-Falls to New-Post.*  
(distance :  $17\frac{1}{2}$  miles)

We must not omit to mention Clay Falls, which is divided into two chutes. On one side a ledge of lime-stone rock 10' thick is visible.

The banks here are a hundred feet high. At the entrance of the Portage, at the water line and even a little higher, there is an horizontal layer of lime-stone, in beds varying in thickness from 6 inches to 2 or 3 feet. This stone is very soft, it fractures easily and practically without splintering. The fracture shows the stone to be of a grayish bistre shade. It is most interesting to observe the numerous fossil remains it contains. It is easy to recognize trunks of trees and you can actually count the annual rings. You also see boughs of all sizes, bark, buds, in a word a buried forest. These substances are mixed up with the clay which has itself undergone the process of petrification and exists at present in the shape of the dull coloured lime-stone above mentioned. Do you wish to understand how this transformation is brought about? Just lift up your eyes and observe all this wood converted into stone was at one time undoubtedly spruce; the petrified cones sufficiently prove this.... What is this, 80 feet above our heads? A forest of living spruce-trees, and under its roots, a clay which is constantly

crumbling away undermined by numerous springs. The forest is thus gradually thrown down and becomes burried in the clay. In a few centuries these trees will be turned into stone, if we way judge by the fate of their predecessors.

One feels amazed in contemplating these phenomena of nature? What I have already said proves the quantity of clay there is in this territory. It exists in layers of great depth. I make special mention of it on the shores of the Abittibi because there only, properly speaking, we can grasp an adequate idea of it : A country of clay means an inexhaustible country. There can be no mistake on this head, here is the foundation of an immense agricultural country. I repeat for the last time that such is nature of the territory from Hudson Bay to lake Temiskaming, with very little exception.

As to the zone which now occupies our attention its distinctive character consists in the abrupt elevation of the banks above the main river Abittibi, and the difficulty of transport arising from same. Martens' Fall which we soon come to is nothing but a series of whirlpools and cascades. After this, we proceed on placid and deep waters as far as New-Post. We have ascended 196 feet since leaving Moose-Factory in a distance of 60 to 70 miles. Here the river has not such steep banks or rather the heights have receded about a mile on each side.

They appear as regular hummocks, always

of clay, about a 100 feet high, and following each other like the beads of a rosary, as far as the hillocks of Long Portage where we may well say *Gloria Patri*. The fire devastated this locality about 20 years ago, so that the new vegetation is not very far advanced and gives the country somewhat a civilized aspect.

These rounded hillocks covered with small green bushes, might easily be mistaken for vineyards. But here we are at New-Post.

## CHAPTER IV

### THIRD ZONE

*From New-Post to lake Abittibi.*  
(distance : 162 miles, mean altitude 492')

#### I

#### *New Post.*

New-Post according to its name is of recent creation. It is a fort established by the Company of H. B. to keep an eye on the Indians of the locality who are disposed to act independently of the Company. It is a post of secondary importance and not relished by the Indians judging by the name they have given it *Gaguine Wakaigan* or *Mosquito Fort*. It is an appropriate name, for the poor natives are sadly annoyed by these pests. I wonder why these sanguinary little demons have a predilection for the place. The fire has devastated all the environs ; the

ground is not damp, the Fort is surrounded by fine fields well cleared and cultivated, fat animals pasture along the hillsides and like man these poor beasts are a prey to the rapacious voracity of this plague of the woods. Can it be that it is a scourge which God sends upon our excellent traders to punish them for selling their goods at such high prices and for charging travellers so exorbitantly ? I am inclined to believe it when I remember how much I paid for a hundred pins, viz : one dollar ! that it is a cent for each pin ; surely this is enough to deserve a few stings from the mosquitoes.

## II

### *The Long-Portage.*

Let us now leave New-Post. After preceeding 5 or 6 miles we reach the famous hillocks of Long-Portage. On our right is the river lashed into foam by a wild descent over formidable declivities ; in fact this is the roughest portion of the River Abittibi. The river emerges from this gorge by a narrow and deep channel through the solid rock. The precipices on each side are so high and close together that the light is somewhat obscured, a hoarse reverberating noise is constantly heard. The canon is exceedingly tortuous, the water is thrown to and fro in all directions, the noise is appalling and one recedes with fear after contemplating from the edge of the precipice this

chaos of water. This impressive scenery continues for about 2 or 3 miles ; but you must turn aside from your regular course and make a detour in order to view it. The pathway inclines towards the left and, ascending, winds in between and sometimes over the hillocks whose crests are many hundred feet high always clay ; not a single stone ; they are all at the bottom of the river. From the summit of the hillocks especially to the North West, a panorama opens before you of which you can form no conception if you have not visited those gorgeous solitudes.

You behold at your feet the tops of large trees which, in the distance, look like small bushes, then as far as the eye can reach stretch the graceful undulations of the plain succeeding one another like the waves of the ocean after a tempest. The forests form a sea of green, in which roam herds of deer scarcely cognizant of the existence of man. Some day those solitudes will be populated ; the forest will disappear ; we will see parishes established. The church steeples standing out prominently near by this roaring cataract saw mills and factories will transform the products of this virgin forest into marketable commodities. How good God must be to have kept in store for us such an ample reserve supply—in fact another Canaan—and I offer up prayer for thee, Canada, my native land !

III

*Frederic River.*  
(altitude 492')

The distance from New-Post to the discharge of lake Abittibi is 162 miles ; the mean elevation of this table-land is 492 feet above sea-level at the mouth of Frederic River, which I shall take as the central point of this region. Here is, according to my humble opinion and experience, the agricultural region *par excellence* of the future. It is useless for me to repeat all I have said about the land. But, if possible, this is more advantageous than anything we have seen since our departure from James Bay. It is not necessary to throw up the soil to examine into its productive powers ; the vegetation it produces naturally is sufficient to give us an ample idea of its wonderful fertility. The spruce and the birch reach gigantic proportions. I do not hesitate to say that these trees are superior to the finest specimens of the same varieties which I have seen in the valley of the Ottawa. I said at the beginning of this work that the white spruce is the indigenous tree in this country.

The pine is more of a curiosity than anything else. You must not infer from this that the climate is severe for I have seen the pine in abundance in colder latitudes, but I am inclined to believe that each region has its peculiar vegetation. It may depend on the absence of seeds which for reasons

unknown to us have never been transported to these places. I am sure that the planting of pine would produce in these regions a forest growth of this variety of timber equal to that of the valley of the Ottawa. I have seen beautiful cedars on the banks of Abittibi river and a few small elms on the islands at the confluence of river Frederic. All the trees found to the south in the valley of the St Lawrence exist here, with the exception of the maple and pine. Penetrating about 20 miles into the forest, I notice that the ground is more level than elsewhere. This territory reminds me of the great burnt lands of the Otter and White rivers around lake Temiskaming. The country is dotted with small lakes where the beavers reign supreme, brooks filled with trout spread in every direction. In different spots where fire has laid waste and where the trees have been uprooted, a luxuriant vegetation has taken place on the soil. It is a generous soil which wants but air and sun to demonstrate the productiveness contained in its bosom.

Instead of these wild herbs which have however a certain value, if millet or clover were planted, what magnificent meadows would spring forth ! As to wheat and other cereals, I am positive they would thrive wonderfully.

IV

*The Fall of the Iroquois.*

70 miles higher than Frederic River we pass *la Chûte aux Iroquois*. An old legend of the Algonquins relates how the Iroquois gave the name to this waterfall; as this pamphlet is limited, I will simply say that this splendid fall of 15 to 20 feet high is admirably situated for utilisation later on. It is charming on account of its beauty, landscapes, but as an industrial centre it would be perfect. At the foot of the Fall, the river forms a vast deep basin a couple of miles in circumference and around which is an excellent site for a village. Navigation on the river above and below the Fall is excellent, the bed of the river is wide and deep and the few obstructions can easily be overcome. I mention this fact to show that Abittibi river, without affording in first rate navigation, could at least be used for a local traffic by means of barges which would certainly be a feature of some importance.

The Iroquois Fall is right in the center of the most heavily timbered portion of the basin of the Abittibi. The spruce, the birch and the cedar grow in compact masses robust and straight. The immense value of the timber in this region will be demonstrated later on; at present but an inadequate idea of same can be formed.

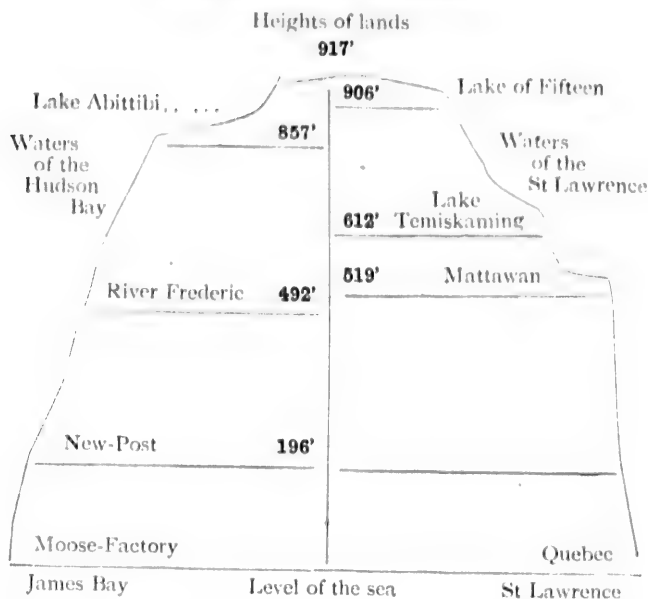
V

*The Kotjidji.*

We did not take time to admire all the beautiful Falls and rapids which we met in coming here from James Bay. It would have been very interesting but too lengthy for this work. Let us be satisfied with casting a glance on this one, the last before reaching great lake Abittibi ; it is 50 feet high. The elevation of the ground which creates the waterfall, marks a complete change in the vegetation. Above this fall the trees are not so high nor so large. Should it be attributed to the sharper atmosphere of lake Abittibi which is 7 miles distant, or to some great fire which at a remote period devastated the forest ? I should rather coincide with the views of the learned Dr Bell and many others, that this difference is caused by circumstances about which I shall say a few words.

# VI

## *Latitudes and Altitudes.*



It is a physical peculiarity known to every one, that the elevation of a place above sea-level influences the climate of the said place similarly as does latitude and consequently, rising to the highest atmospheres has the same effect on the thermometer as to approach the pole. This point being settled, let us look on the above diagram where I have indicated the respective altitudes of several places of different latitudes. Taking  $51^{\circ} 15'$  latitude of Moose-Factory and  $48^{\circ} 41'$  latitude of Fort Albany you will find that the latter place, although it is situated 240 miles to the south, does not enjoy a milder climate

than the first for the reason, easily understood, that the altitude of lake Abittibi is 857 feet above Moose. The altitude of Frederic river being 492 feet makes the climate milder than at the Height of lands which is 917 feet above the level of the sea, although Frederic river is 200 miles to the north. Moreover this calculation is not theory. A casual observation is enough to establish the fact. Those who have travelled from the Province of Quebec or Ontario towards the north, and who having reached the height of lands believe that the climate increases in severity, may take courage, they will soon perceive that in coming down towards the basin of James Bay, it is quite the opposite. They will suffer from heat sometimes unbearable, and they will see by the vigor of the vegetation that this country is far from being the fearful Siberia described by certain travellers. •

Besides I must not omit a peculiarity regarding vegetation which obtains in high latitudes. It is the rapidity with which the growth progresses. The days being of an unusual length, the summer nights are warm. Thus, there is no discontinuance of progress. The leaf hesitates to come out of the bud ; but once it has done so, it grows exceedingly quickly. The vegetation is completed in a short lapse of time ; what matters a couple of months more if they are not needed ? The principal point is that frost should intervene to ruin all hopes in one

night ; but summer frost is a thing unheard of in those lands. Add to this the extreme fertility of the soil and you have all the conditions necessary for an agricultural country even though you cannot cultivate oranges !

## CHAPTER V

### FOURTH ZONE

*From lake Abittibi to Temiskaming.*  
(distance : 135 miles)

#### I

#### *Lake Abittibi.*

All these beautiful indian names have their meaning. This one is composed of two words : *abitta* half, and *bi* which signifies *water*. Some say that this name was given to the lake because it is situated half way between *I really do not know what* and Hudson Bay. My humble opinion is that the name was first given to the river and afterwards extended to the lake. I suppose that what I have said about the separation of the waters of the Abittibi from those of Moose has not been forgotten. Here occurs a phenomenon similar to that of the St Lawrence and the Ottawa at the extremity of the island of Montreal. For a considerable distance the waters do not mix together, and form a line of demarcation easily seen, easily understood when you think of the difference

which exists between the clear limpid waters of the Moose, and the muddy stream of the Abittibi. The Indians could say Abittabi for two reasons : 1<sup>o</sup> because the waters of one of these rivers for a distance do not commingle apparently with others ; 2<sup>o</sup> because the water of the Abittibi is half *water* and half *mud* so to speak. I think therefore these two facts enough to justify my opinion. Let every one have his own opinion however and we shall not be worse friends. Anyhow, it does not prevent lake Abittibi from being a fine sheet of water 40 miles long and 10 miles wide. It is shallow, abounding with fish and dotted with small islands which give it a most picturesque appearance.. The land to the North-West shows a few mountains which may be 600 or 800 feet high. Small hillocks are seen here and there ; but generally speaking the neighbouring soil is level. Its quality is good like the rest course of this vast region and the territory of Abittibi would make a splendid center of colonization. The climate is not so favourable as in other northern parts, like the shores of Frederic river for instance, but it is not severe enough to make the raising of wheat, an impossible thing. They actually harvest very good barley, and potatoes in abundance. The *potatoe bug* has not yet put in an appearance here or in James Bay. The climate in all this territory is very salubrious. There is about the same quantity of snow-fall, perhaps less than at Ottawa. As a general rule

we may lay down as a principle that wheat ripens and comes to maturity here and one cannot therefore class this region as being unfit for agriculture, that is to say the slope extending from lake Temiskaming to the shores of James Bay including even the height of lands and lands round lake Abitibi. Splendid forests surround this lake. The white and red spruce predominate as usual. Red pine is to be seen on the flanks of the hills and on all the islands in the lake. The Company of H. B. possesses at lake Abitibi a large Fort : about 400 algonquin families trade their furs here with the Company. The Reverend Oblats Fathers have erected a pretty church, and a prosperous mission exists.

## II

### *The height of lands.*

Such is the name given to the ridge dividing the waters of the St Lawrence and of the Ottawa from those which flow towards Hudson Bay. Here you would expect to see formidable mountains, rugged and uninviting, standing as the columns of Hercules. There is nothing of the sort however. Of all the regions through which we have journeyed, this is the most level and least rugged. This is by all means a region of lakes of all shapes and sizes. God has here placed a multitude of inexhaustible reservoirs dispensing water in full measure, and in this manner supply numerous rivers. For the

first time since leaving James Bay we meet the white pine. Here begin the Pine forest. I nearly said inexhaustible, but alas ! they rapidly disappear under the axe of the lumberman—and the fires kindled by the carelessness of the choppers. It is really heart rending to see such richness, bestowed on our country by Providence, thus sacrificed. How many thousands aye millions have thus been lost ! The present laws are not sufficient to prevent these disasters. This question should be seriously considered ; and the necessary expenses made to prevent the destruction of our forests ; this would indeed prove a profitable venture if it brought about such result. Let us not leave the height of lands without casting a glance on the Wewelizonadjî or Sorcerer's mountain which stands like a forked peak in the middle of the plain, similar to the mountain of St Hilaire in the valley of the St Lawrence. It is the only elevation worthy of that name we meet in this locality. You can see it twenty miles away ; it looks as blue as the sky ; is nearly 1000 feet high. Charming indian legends are connected with this peak, but we have no time to devote to them.

### III

#### *Lac des Quinze.*

After a day and a half travelling we reach the *Lac des Quinze* about 15' below the level of the height of lands. This lake like

Temiskaming is but a vast enlargement of the Ottawa River.

We are now on the southern declivity and behold with pleasure the maple, our national tree and ensign. The lake is of an irregular shape presenting somewhat the figure of a cross.

It is very deep and has but a few islands ; it is surrounded by dense forests of pine. The soil is highly favourable to agriculture. Pushing towards the east you pass, without rapids, into the waters of the Ottawa river which is, at this point finer and more majestic than under the towers of the Parliament Buildings. Soon another large lake opens before us : the Winaveia that the English mispronounce as Mijizowadja : these individuals (I must say it *en passant*, it will relieve me) have a special talent for deforming and changing all the beautiful Indian names that are so appropriate in their meaning and so euphonious in their sound. We shall now proceed because the diversion I have just made puts us somewhat out of our course. It would lead us towards the sources of the Gatineau which I do not wish to describe to day. We are going to Temiskaming. I always said it was my *Garden of Eden*. It is a pity I was expelled from it. I assure you it was not for eating forbidden fruit. . . . . I hope to entering it again.

IV

*The rapids of "Des Quinze."*

Lac des Quinze being 906' above the level of the sea, and lake Temiskaming 612 feet ; as a consequence the difference of 294 feet marks the total elevation of the rapids through which the Ottawa descends from one lake to the other. This abrupt descent is completed in a distance of 15 miles ; this gives an average of at least 13 feet per mile. This induces us to believe that there is between the two lakes a barrier of solid mountains—but I am still seeking for them—In traversing this locality by land you scarcely notice any inclination towards the south. It is simply the plain of clay, propped up by a slope of granite base and unbroken except where the river claims its rights. I have given years ago in my narrations published in the "Opinion Publique" a detailed description of these famous rapids. I was amazed by the beauty of the splendid landscapes about which an englishman of H. B. one day said to me : "It is the only spot worthy of the brush of a painter." I am not so exclusive, but I say it is simply gorgeous. As to the economical prospect, which is the object of this work, I think I agree with all who have visited those noted rapids, when I say that they are the most valuable hydraulic power of all Canada. Some say that the names of fifteen comes from the number of the rapids. This

assertion is a little kazardous—they might just as well be named the Thirty or the Fifty. For my part, I never succeeded in counting them. But I remark having counted more than 25 and real waterfalls at that. This immense hydraulic powers stand between two great lakes surrounded by magnificent forests and agricultural land. Superior to any we possess in the Dominion. Don't you think it might before long become another Bytown? This important locality is entirely in the province of Quebec.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE REGION OF TEMISKAMING.

So much has been said of this country during the last few years, that there is no other alternative for the present scribe than to repeat what his predecessors have written. There is one consolation left. It is to see that all those who treated my remarks as visionary when first I ventured to reveal to the world this marvellous country, to day clamor more loudly than me that what I said is still wide of the truth. I am proud of their conversion which I remember having prophesied. May the same thing happen for regards the regions I extol in this pamphlet. I shall not say much about Temiskaming but will be contented with a general glance. What I designate as the region of Temiskaming embraces all the lands watered by the great

lake and its tributaries. This gives an area of 18,225 square miles. It is quite a province. Lake Temiskaming which occupies the centre of this immense basin is situated at 612 feet above the level of the sea, latitude  $47^{\circ} 50'$  and longitude  $79^{\circ} 54'$ . It is 75 miles long and 10 miles wide. It is perhaps the only lake of such an extent which is navigable all its length for vessels of the heavy tonnage. The "Great Eastern" could easily float on it. The lake owes its name to its extraordinary depth—*temi* deep and *gami* or *kansi* expanse of waters—six large rivers some of which more considerable than the "Du Lièvre," flow into lake Temiskaming.

They are as follows, viz: the Ottawa itself, of which the lake is but a vast enlargement, the white river, navigable for steam-boats for 30 miles, the Otter which waters the townships of Guigues and Duhamel; the Kepewa, the discharge of a vast inland sea which stretches its arms as far as the sources of the Gatineau; the Montreal river and the Matapidjiwan, rich with natural curiosities.

A multitude of smaller streams join these main arteries or bring their tribute directly to the great lake.

All those rivers, large and small, run through the lands most favourable for colonization. It is the vast plain, or rather, the beginning of the vast plain of clay which extends towards the north as far as the shores of James Bay and in the west, are connected

with the great prairies of Manitoba. I see no difference whatever between the climate of Temiskaming and that of Ottawa, excepting that here the excessive heat of summer is exquisitely tempered by the neighbouring waters. This liquid mass, once it is warmed, presents the autumn frost, covering the shores with a protecting fog, during the cold nights at the end of September. The white pine of commerce exists in abundance ; numerous rafts of square timber have been drawn from the valley of Temiskaming, but still the forests seem to be practically untouched. There is no doubt that this region will remain for years to come the headquarters of the *chantiers* of the Dominion. Unfortunately, Temiskaming, like all the other wooded regions of our Province, has not been spared by the fire. It is certainly a great pity ; but on the other hand, when we consider the immense portions of land which have been cleared by the conflagration, we appreciate more the benefit which has resulted for the settler, than we regret the destroyed forest. In fact the clearing of land is such an easy task in some places, that I could mention the names of many settlers who have cleared three *arpents* in a week. When the earth is thus cleared not a stump is left. As to rocks there are none except on the mountains. The elevations here and there spring from the level, plain like islands in the sea. They are nothing but beauty marks and break the mo-

notony of the horizontal surface. From the summit of these hills you can see in the distance the fields recently cultivated which seem like spots of bright green amidst which appears the small dwelling of the settler; and further on the great lake which reflects the azure sky; large bays running back between abrupt capes which soon become narrow defiles partly open showing the black blue sky overhead and the conjunction of the land and water.

There is something peculiar in lake Temiskaming. If you cross it by boat it appears to be fringed by high mountains and bluff cliffs which sometimes overhang: Many unobservant travelers have inferred from this fact that Temiskaming is the most inhospitable country in the world. But all these mountains are scarcely one mile in width and they seem to vanish out of sight as soon as you step to the plain. I might compare lake Temiskaming to an immense basin surrounded by a wall, or to a fountain in the center of a garden. Its delightful shores, its varied views, recall to our mind the scenery of the Saguenay. When this splendid lake is surrounded by pretty villages and white houses clustered around their church, we might fancy ourselves on the banks of the St. Lawrence, near Kamouraska or River du Loup. My fond desire has always been to populate this region with Canadians and to establish the parish system of the Province of Quebec. But who

will realized this dream of mine? . . . Surely not the would-be colonization companies who only aim at the filling of their own purse.

The brave pioneers who populated the Canada of our fathers had other motives in view. The foundation of a nation has for its basis abnegation and self sacrifice. Those virtues have their source, only in the church of Jesus-Christ.

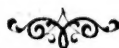
Without practical religion there is only a deceitful and hypocritical patriotism. Church then should be ahead of colonization. You understood this, Mr Prime Minister, and realized it by choosing, amidst universal applause of the nation, the worthy and clever curé Labelle, the eminent apostle of colonization, and placed him with you at the head of this great national enterprise, to assist in the developement of our country.

Such wisdom was not even thought of by your predecessors, but fills with joy all Canadians who have at heart the expansion of their country, and they augur from it an era of progress and prosperity they did not dare to hope for, until now. Owing to your watchful administration and intelligent and well informed patriotism, confidence (long ago lost,) comes back in all ranks of the people. From those ranks will spring forth legions desirous of serving under your command, and anxious to lend you their devoted cooperation for the work you have undertaken with so much tact and which you push so

vigourously. The Church and the State, so harmoniously associated, will work wonders and raise high the prestige of the Canadian name.

This is the wish of your most devoted servant who asks but for one thing more : It is to soon join the body of brave soldiers who devote themselves to the welfare of their country, to take part in their glorious campaigns and to die with them under the flag of Religion and Fatherland !

C. A. M. PARADIS, Pst, O. M. I.



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